CHAPTER VII
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In the era of globalisation and privatisation, the responsibilities which were earlier shouldered by the state alone are now increasingly shared by or taken over by the private sector and the schools are no exception to this trend. The increase in the growth of private schools has been possible due to the fact that they have the right to exist and parents have the right to choose the kind of education which they desire for their children. Since parents are now-a-days ready to spend on their children’s education, it is implicit that privatisation of school education is here to stay. The fact that the poor parents are not opting for free lunch and textbooks in government schools and moving towards private schools, particularly in the urban areas shows the demand of private schools and English medium education. However, private schools are also criticised for being more accessible to upper castes, elites and to the boys.

The present study addresses the ongoing debate between government and private schools and attempts to study two schools via their culture. The term ‘school culture’ is as elusive as the term ‘culture’ itself. It includes tangible and visible aspects as well as the tacit assumptions, perceptions, attitudes and beliefs of the people. The school culture, seems to permeate almost everything: the way people act, what they talk about or consider taboo, whether they seek out colleagues or isolate themselves, and how teachers feel about their work and their students (Deal and Peterson, 2009). This aspect of school culture is something which is not given, but evolved and created by the members of the school through interactions, interpersonal relationships, perceptions, and through the school norms.

I
Differential ‘School Culture’

The school culture, in the present context, is viewed as the existence of the interplay between various factors – the organizational structure,
power relationships, cultural norms of the school, attitudes and beliefs of the teachers, students and parents, the relationships between the persons in the school and the teaching learning process (Henry, 1971). In this regard, the framework of school culture is holistic in the sense that it brings out the reality (both superficial and embedded) of the school and provides deeper understanding of what exactly happens inside the school and classrooms. The whole (culture) is present in the parts and the parts (the structure, norms, attitudes of the people) become microcosms of the whole. All the components included in the school make up the whole.

The discussion so far in the preceding chapters reveals that the culture of the ZPHS and NMHS is distinct. The culture of ZPHS is marked with flexibility, autonomy of teachers, freedom to make choices, strong peer-relationships, and stress free academic atmosphere. On the other hand, the NMHS has an entirely different culture discernable by its rigidity, autocracy, result-oriented, inflexible norms, lack of liberty for the teachers, over-burdened and exhausted students and stressed academic atmosphere.

Thus, these two distinct cultures can be classified based on Handy’s (1985) typology of cultures as:

**Power culture:** In this kind of culture, power is concentrated among a few people. Control radiates from the center like a web. Power and influence spread out from a central figure or group. Power derives from the top person and personal relationships with that individual matters more than any formal title of position. Power cultures have little bureaucracy and swift decisions can ensue. The culture of NMHS is closer to the power culture where the school management and more specifically, the school director is the most powerful person. His decisions are the ultimate and everyone abides by them.

**Role culture:** In this type of culture, people have clearly delegated authorities within a highly defined structure. Organizations form hierarchical bureaucracies and are controlled by procedures, role
descriptions and authority definitions. Power derives from a person’s position and little scope exists for expert power. These are predictable and consistent systems and procedures are highly valued. The culture of ZPHS exhibits role culture where there is a hierarchical chain of command and relationships are highly formalized. The roles and responsibilities at each level are clearly defined. It is bound with regulations and paperwork, and authority and hierarchy dominate the relationships.

Despite being two distinct cultures, there is a commonality between ZPHS and NMHS – the relationship between teachers, students and parents. Social class constantly pervades between the relationships of teachers, students and parents, and shapes everyday interactions. Parents’ social class impacts their involvement in school. Moreover, the relationship between teachers and parents also revolves around the social class. Government school teachers are in higher status positions relative to working class parents whereas in NMHS they are either higher, parallel or in some cases even lower-status positions than the parents. The social distance between the teachers and parents impacts on how teachers and parents understand each other and each others’ roles and responsibilities. As discussed in the chapters, in both the schools, teachers had a very class and caste specific view of the parents and students.

II

Implications of School Culture on Quality of Education

In the discourses about education in general and privatisation of education in particular, we often hear the issue of quality of education in both the categories of schools. The debate between government and private schools often revolves around the issue of quality. We frequently come across people saying that the quality of education in private schools is better than the government schools or the quality of education should be improved in the government schools. Kumar (2004) argues that the notion of quality implies two or more versions of the same thing, arranged in a hierarchical order implying the
relative presence of a valued characteristic. According to him, privately run institutions thrive on the popular assumption that whatever is not under state control must be of some quality. For parents and students, quality in education is primarily related to the performance of the student measured through standardized tests. However, there is no common consensus among the researchers regarding how to define the ‘quality’ or what attributes constitute quality in education.

UNICEF states that every child has a right to quality education and recognizes five dimensions of quality which includes:

- “Learners who are healthy, well-nourished and ready to participate and learn, and supported in learning by their families and communities;
- Environments that are healthy, safe, protective and gender-sensitive, and provide adequate resources and facilities;
- Content that is reflected in relevant curricula and materials for the acquisition of basic skills, especially in the areas of literacy, numeracy and skills for life, and knowledge in such areas as gender, health, nutrition, HIV/AIDS prevention and peace.
- Processes through which trained teachers use child-centered teaching approaches in well-managed classrooms and schools and skilful assessment to facilitate learning and reduce disparities.
- Outcomes that encompass knowledge, skills and attitudes, and are linked to national goals for education and positive participation in society” (UNICEF, 2000:1).

Thus, its dimensions of learners, environments, contents, processes and outcomes are mostly taken as the desirable dimensions of quality. Similar set of issues were highlighted by Chapman and Adams (2002) and for them education quality refers to inputs (numbers of teachers, amount of teacher training, number of textbooks), processes (amount of direct instructional time, extent of active learning), outputs (test
scores, graduation rates), and outcomes (performance in subsequent employment)\(^1\). They further argue that all developing countries have reported dissatisfaction with the quality of their education systems. Often mentioned causes are the inputs such as teacher training, the lack of teacher motivation, the need for curriculum revision, inadequate facilities, and insufficient textbooks.

In India the usage of the term ‘quality’ began from mid-1990s (Sarangapani, 2010). Kumar and Sarangapani (2004) gave two different meanings of quality. One refers to the essential character property or attribute by which a thing may be identified or described and the other refers to the superiority or rank of one thing over the other. Researchers like Govinda and Varghese (1992) analysed the quality of education through four dimensions: infrastructural facilities, teachers’ qualifications, teaching-learning process and learner achievement. Khaparde et al (2004) consider decentralisation of management responsibilities as an important indicator of quality of education. The Quality Council of India (2000) reports that merely providing adequate infrastructure, teaching-learning material, adequate teaching and non-teaching staff, providing conducive atmosphere in the school for learning are not sufficient requirements towards the quality education. Along with this, components of the curriculum, viz. syllabus, pedagogy, examination, affiliation and accreditation standards are also important factors which need to be addressed while dealing with quality issues in education.

Kumar (2009) argues that educational quality requires that the learner retains some control in his or her own growth and the teacher remains autonomous to respond to the learner rather than to demands that emanate from parents or the market. Thus, quality in

\(^1\) Quality as outputs or outcomes involves the consequences of education. “Outputs” refer to the short-term consequences of schooling, e.g., students’ cognitive achievement, completion rates, certification, individual skills, attitudes, and behaviors; while “outcomes” refer to longer-term, often socially significant, consequences of education, e.g., employment, earnings, health, civic engagement, and the like, as well as social attitudes, behaviors, and skills (Chapman and Adams, 2002).
education has been interpreted by him as a comprehensive and holistic view of education. But of late, the debate on quality has been confined to the instrumentalist view of education (Kumar, 2010). J.P. Naik (1975) rightly describes equality, quality and quantity as the elusive triangle of Indian education.

Thus, the above discussion shows that it is difficult to define what constitutes quality in education due to its complexity and multifaceted nature. The argument here is that both ‘school culture’ and ‘quality’ are inter-related to a large extent. Quality is a multi-dimensional concept and each of its dimensions is influenced from one or the other factors present in the school. If dimensions like inputs, content, environment, processes and outputs are studied, but student-teacher interactions, values inculcated in the school and classrooms, sanctions, perceptions of teachers and students etc are not taken into account (which can be studied only using the concept of school culture), then it becomes a very narrow approach towards understanding the quality. School culture provides a holistic framework to study these different factors/dynamics (present in the schools). Only through understanding the school culture, we can understand what kind of education is being provided and in what ways. Thus, one can understand the multi-dimensional aspects of quality of education from a holistic framework of school culture.

Going by this argument, let us see the various factors that are rooted in its culture and affect the quality of education in NMHS and ZPHS:

**Dominance of ‘Textbook-Culture’**

School textbooks, undoubtedly, are the storehouse of information and give a direction to the teacher in the process of teaching. However, when teachers take textbooks as the sole source of information and teaching material, the repercussions are quite understandable. Learning becomes a monotonous and tedious journey for the students. It was observed that teachers take the textbooks (in government school) and study materials (in private school) as the one and only available resource, and thus, neither involve students in any
activities nor attempt to teach in an innovative way. Unlike the ‘textbook culture’ in ZPHS, it is entirely ‘study material culture’ in NMHS wherein the study materials/guidebooks have almost replaced the textbooks.

Teachers do not move beyond the textbooks and do not attempt to link information to real life experiences\(^2\). The load of school bag depicts the adherence and dependency on the school textbooks. Moreover, the emphasis was always on syllabus completion and teachers hastily try to finish the prescribed syllabus as soon as they can without actually knowing whether the child is able to understand the concepts or grasp the fundamentals. As a consequence, students end up with having very ‘bookish information’ and do not have the scope to think beyond their textbooks. They are not given a chance to construct knowledge from their own experiences and with the available resources from their surroundings. This is especially true of the NMHS children who are kind of insulated and confined within the school building for longer duration every day. ZPHS children, on the other hand, remain in the school for a shorter duration which gives them a chance to experience and enjoy the life outside the school.

Time and again, it has been reiterated in various reports (for instance, Learning without Burden Report and National Curriculum Framework 2005) and by the intelligentsia that learning at school should be a joyful experience at school rather than being a burden, but in vain. In reality, school education boils down to textbooks and syllabus completion. Both students and teachers tend to think that whatever information is given in the textbook/study material is the ultimate knowledge, and thus, students are not given a chance to reflect and use their own experiences or ideas. Thus, there is only reproduction of information rather than construction of knowledge.

\(^2\) Kumar (2009) argues that the roots of textbook culture can be traced to the early nineteenth century in Wood’s Despatch wherein it was decided that the aim of the education system was to acculturate Indian children and youth in European ideas and perceptions through English as a medium of instruction.
Teacher-centred pedagogy

With utmost emphasis on syllabus completion and reliance on textbooks, teacher becomes an authoritative person and children are mute spectators rather than active participants in the class. In both ZPHS and NMHS, their participation was very restricted and as mentioned earlier, whenever they participated, it was always in a group and in the form of answering the questions posed by the teachers. From the classroom observations it was very apparent that the teachers have inculcated this habit among the students. Most of the time, teachers ask questions to the students and rarely the other way round. Questions that are posed by the teachers are mostly closed-ended for which there is only one word reply which is answered in a group. Children’s experiences and their voices were literally absent in the teaching-learning process. Furthermore, in both the schools, all the teachers use conventional teaching method with no activities or teaching aids.

Mehan (1980) argues that for an effective participation of the students in the classroom, they must accumulate a stock of academic knowledge as well as they should learn the interactionally appropriate ways to cast their academic knowledge. Thus, what students know during lessons i.e., the academic content and how to display what they know i.e., the interactional form is necessary to analyse any classroom discourse. In this context, interactional form is referred as the competence of the student to use language appropriately in different contexts. Since there is no construction of knowledge by the students and they are not brought up in an academically stimulating atmosphere, they lack proper academic content. Moreover, the demand for English medium education is growing leaps and bounds, but students in low-medium cost private schools face difficulties in using the language as there is a difference in the language favoured in school and that which is learned at home. Thus, students are neither good in academic content nor do they have competence to use language appropriately in different contexts. As a consequence, there is no effective participation of students in the classrooms. The situation
becomes even worse as the teachers too lack competency in displaying both academic content and language which, in turn, disrupts the flow of classroom interaction. Teaching in both the schools was a one-way process where students were passive recipients rather than active participants. All these inherent deficiencies do not allow the classroom discourses to proceed smoothly.

**Exam-oriented Learning**

What educationists and policy makers say about holistic development through education becomes redundant for a common man for whom everything boils down to marks and ranks which his child has secured in the exams. Schools (especially, private schools) too strive hard to meet parental demands through conducting numerous exams in a year and constantly assessing students through marks. Examinations in the form of unit tests, assignment tests have become a routine procedure in schools and ZPHS and NMHS are no exception to this.

Teachers tend to teach from the examination point of view so that students can score well in the exams. This trend is even more evident in NMHS as parents expect good results from their children since they are paying fees for it. The teacher’s prime responsibility is to prepare children to take the exams. Those teachers in NMHS who see beyond the exam based vision of teaching quickly become demoralized by the school management. Thus, these teachers lack institutional support if they want to do something innovative. A major drawback in the studied private school is that study materials have replaced the textbooks. However, the worse thing is that even in study materials, students are taught only selected ‘important’ questions and the rest, which according to the teachers are ‘unimportant’ and not relevant for the exams are left out. Thus, students not only learn bookish information, but what they learn is very superficial and only marks-centred. It was observed that if the question is slightly twisted or if some other question is asked which is not there in the study material, students fail to reply.
Amidst the pressure of exams and the struggle for scoring well, *rote-learning has become a convention* and invariably all the students mechanically repeat and memorise whatever is written in the study material without understanding what the lesson is all about. It was found that teachers further encourage this trend and make students memorise the answers through repetition ignoring the comprehension level of students.

**Teachers’ subjective interest**

With increasing commercialisation and privatisation of school education, teachers too have started thinking commercially. It is pertinent to highlight that teachers in ZPHS and NMHS mostly work for a subjective interest which is predominantly economic. The remuneration and perks given to the teachers plays a very crucial role in determining the dedication of teachers in the school. On one hand, government teachers are paid lucrative salaries with many benefits (as discussed in chapter 5) which, in turn, provides them with social security. On the other hand, teachers in NMHS are paid meagre wages with no job security. It was noticed that the quality of teaching is affected both ways. In the case of government teachers, the salary is unrelated to their performance in the school. Whether they go to the classes or not, whether they are punctual or not, they receive their salaries. Since there is no accountability, supervision and monitoring of teachers, they develop lethargic and shirking attitude which has almost become a way of life in this profession. With secured jobs and lucrative salary structure, teachers lack dedication towards children and teaching.

In NMHS, meagre earnings, rigid atmosphere and imposed regulations makes the teacher work in a much stressed atmosphere exactly like the students. They are constantly accountable to the school management and parents. There is always a mental strain which is reflected in their teaching. The work culture and disagreements with the school management leads to dissatisfaction among the teachers. Low salaries and lack of recognition for their hard work and devotion
further aggravates the problem. As a consequence, teachers do not have the motivation and zeal to see whether students are able to understand the chapters well. Teachers hastily try to finish the syllabus to meet the deadlines. It appears that they are actively participating in the process of teaching, but in reality, their participation is imposed. Thus, when the school management and school ethos are not attractive to the teachers, the repercussions are reflected in their teaching. The following table summarises the positive and negative aspects related to the teachers in both the schools:

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<tr>
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<th>ZPHS Teachers</th>
<th>NMHS Teachers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Positive</strong></td>
<td>▪ Psychological satisfaction</td>
<td>▪ Salaries given on time</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>▪ Autonomy</td>
<td>▪ School in proximity to the house</td>
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<td>▪ Lucrative salaries</td>
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<td></td>
<td>▪ Social Security</td>
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<td>▪ Social Status</td>
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<td></td>
<td>▪ Flexible work atmosphere</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Negative</strong></td>
<td>▪ Shirking attitude</td>
<td>▪ Immense mental stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Lack of accountability</td>
<td>▪ Long work hours</td>
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<td></td>
<td>▪ Lack of dedication</td>
<td>▪ Incompetent and less qualified</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Meagre salaries</td>
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<td>▪ Job insecurity</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Autocratic decision-making</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Lack of psychological satisfaction</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>▪ Rigid work atmosphere</td>
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**Values inculcated through schooling**

In the present scenario, where the task of socialisation is, to a major extent, being handed over to schools by the parents, the former shoulders a huge responsibility of inculcating the right kind of values among the students like equality, secularism, nationalism and the like. The NCF-2005 document states that apart from participating in
economic and social change, education should build a commitment to the values of equality, justice, freedom, secularism, respect for human rights and dignity, and sensitivity to others feeling and well being. It also states that education should enhance the creative expression and the capacity for aesthetic appreciation. Kumar and Sarangapani (2004) argue that quality is implicit in education and its aims.

However, with increasing commercialisation, individual achievement and competitiveness have become predominant values and schools are no exception to this. This is particularly true for the NMHS where students are nurtured in a competitive atmosphere and individual achievement is always appreciated. Pupils compete among themselves for marks and success in examinations for better job prospects in future. Thus, students are socialised amidst the values of competition, achievement, meritocracy, and individualism. In ZPHS, competitive atmosphere was not as stark as in the NMHS and students always loved to give and share with their friends which undoubtedly reflect elementary forms of collective behaviour. The values of co-operation and togetherness were very evident among the children. This quality was lacking completely among NMHS children who always feared that sharing with friends would make others surpass and score well in exams. Due to this reason, peer group relationships were not strong and there was no feeling of helpfulness and togetherness. This is exactly opposite to the ZPHS children where peer relationships were very intense. Through the morning assembly, NMHS tries to impart the values of equality, spiritualism and respect to elders and teachers, but amidst the exam and marks centric atmosphere this becomes secondary and reduced to a mere routine procedure which is done for 5 to 10 minutes everyday.

It is pertinent to highlight here that when teachers themselves do not have the values of equality and equity, it is futile to think of children learning the right qualities through education. Teachers’ perceptions of students in both the schools are rooted in the child’s family background. As mentioned earlier, they have a caste and class centric
view of the students and the cause for the poor performance of students is attributed to their family background. Hence, they always demoralise and denigrate the students and have a very pessimistic attitude towards them. They identify parents as labourers, migrants, alcoholics with no proper values and students are socialised in such kind of atmosphere.

Bourdieu (1974) stresses the fact that each family, indirectly rather than directly, transmits to its children a certain cultural capital, defined as a range of cultural goods, titles or forms of behaviour that one has acquired through socialization and enables the person to succeed. This, in turn, gets internalized and converted into an integral part of the person, i.e., habitus. This includes embodied cultural capital (a person’s demeanor, clothing, taste, speech and manners), objectified cultural capital (material possessions) and institutionalized cultural capital (academic qualifications). It is pertinent to highlight that the cultural capital which is transmitted to the children by the family is considered as inferior by the teachers. This is particularly true to the embodied cultural capital which is characterised by clothing, speech, manners, deportment, and the like which according to teachers is not a proper attribute to move ahead in the present day circumstances. Moreover, since the parents are less educated, the institutionalised cultural capital is lacking among the children. This is one major reason because of which children of all the government teachers and volunteers are not studying in government school. Teachers feel that government schools are for economically and socially backward children. Enrolling their children in good private schools is a status symbol for them. Besides this, there are other reasons for not admitting their children in government school like inadequate infrastructure, incompetent teachers to teach in English and the like. The attitude of NMHS teachers towards the children is

1Only two teachers in ZPHS, however, reported that students of ZPHS have ‘dhairyam’ (courage) to face any situation. They are matured and know the difficulties in real life and struggle a lot. They can do well at school, only thing is they have to listen what is taught in the class.
also very negative and the *habitus* with which children come to the school is seen as substandard. Teachers perceive the students as having subnormal intelligence and improper family background which is not congenial for academic success. Thus, though equality is an important aspect of quality (Kumar, 2010), it was found that the notion that every child matters and deserved good education, irrespective of caste, class and gender divisions was lacking among the teachers.

**Learners’ background**

As discussed in the previous chapters, family background and the way children are reared at home are very crucial factors in a child’s engagement with learning. Kumar (2010) argues that quality of education at school cannot be viewed in isolation from the larger universe in which a child’s growth unfolds. As discussed in chapter six, most of the children in government school and one third in the private school are first generation learners. Another major impediment which affects the learning of the child is the fact that parents who are literate have studied in Telugu medium which has totally become redundant in the present scenario with increasing demand of English medium education. Parents are well aware of the fact that competence in English is one possible door to move to better opportunities and acquiring higher status in the society. Since parents are not familiar with English language, helping the child with studies is not feasible at home and as a result students’ learning takes place only at school. Students are entirely dependent on the school for learning, reading, writing, and arithmetic skills. Apart from this, the involvement of government school children in economic activities to support their families also has a bearing on the way they perform at school. However, these children are the ones who struggle hard for survival. While the children of private school are predominantly immersed into studies, government school children experience the work life as well as school life on a day to day basis. Since children are not from sound financial background they work for at least two hours daily to support their families in their own way.
Thus, all these facets like lack of knowledge construction, marks centred teaching, minimal participation of child in the classroom, lack of dedication among ZPHS teachers, unhappy teacher community in NMHS, improper values inculcated in the school, caste-class centric view of teachers towards the students and other factors like appalling infrastructure, lack of co-curricular activities (discussed in previous chapters), etc are responsible for diluting the quality of education.

**Factors affecting child’s performance**

Time and again, it has been said that the performance of government school children is very poor. A layperson views government schools as all play and no studies. However, as Henry (1971) asserts, the outcome of the schooling depends upon a complex of factors. In his model of outcome of a child’s experience with the formal educational system, he identifies three factors:

$$O = f (E + S + P) T$$

Where O stands for the outcome of the total educational experience of the child, E for experience at home, S for the influence of school culture, P for the peer-group experience, and T for time.

He argues that any one factor alone cannot explain why some children fail and others succeed. He further suggests that the longer any process continues the greater effect it will have on the outcome of the educational experience.

In the present study, all the three factors - home, school culture and peer group experiences – have been taken into consideration while understanding a child’s engagement with learning. Apart from these, fourth factor i.e., child’s interest in studies is also crucial for the academic performance of the child. It is argued that interplay between all these factors: home environment and parental motivation at family level, competent and dedicated teachers and innovative teaching methods at school level, attentive and responsible peer group and child’s own interest in studies are responsible for the academic performance of the child. Absence of any one factor leads to poor
performance and this is applicable to both government as well as private school and not to government school alone. If the school wants to inculcate certain skills or qualities in the child, there are other non-school factors like family and peer group which may mould the child differently.

III

**Differential Education In ZPHS and NMHS**

One common strand that connects both government and private school is the overall ideology of the schools, which in Bernstein’s terms is closer to the ‘instrumental order’ than the ‘expressive order’. Instrumental order of the school is that complex of behaviour and activities which have to do with the acquisition of specific skills assessed by relatively objective means such as tests and examinations while expressive order has to do with conduct, character and manner (Bernstein, 1975). Bernstein further argues that the instrumental order is potentially divisive and distinguishes between groups and individual pupils according to their assessed performance and conferring eligibility for certain occupations while the purpose of the expressive is consensual in the creation of a common moral collectivity (ibid: 38).

Although both the schools, ZPHS and NMHS, exhibit ‘instrumental order’, in NMHS it is very explicit. Students strive to learn as much as they can and try their level best to score well and succeed in examinations. This would satisfy not only the teachers and parents, but students could also find a place in the competitive world. Parents view English medium education as a tool to economic mobility. Thus, the expressive order takes a backseat in the light of parental and

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4 Similarly, Thapan (2006) too distinguishes between local order and transcendental order of the school. ‘Local’ orders constitute the actual schooling process and tend to function independent of the transcendental orders which provides guidelines on how the school ought to function. (2006: 28).

5 Durkheim (1961) views schools as setting for moral education and teacher's task is to create a social, moral being. According to him, moral education comprises of three elements: discipline, attachment to the social group and autonomy. He argues that schools are capable of inducing in the child the habits of group life and the need to tie into collective forces.
market demand which ultimately judges the students with marks and grades.

The NMHS boasts of trained English medium teachers, better infrastructure, small pupil-teacher ratio, IIT and medicine foundation and so on, but it does not deliver to the promises with which it was established. Since everything revolves around fee and results, the management resorts to exploitative practices for students and teachers. When these basic requirements itself are not met, it is dubious to imagine how children are shaping up in the school. The actual goals of education are found only in the pamphlets or brochures which are distributed at the time of admission. For instance, a quotation of Swami Vivekananda is written on the school pamphlet of NMHS which reads:

“We want that kind of education by which character is formed, the strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded and by which one can stand on ones feet”.

Likewise, the report card of the school elaborates on the conduct and behaviour of the child and states:

We stress on character building which is very much essential for our social set-up. We expect that our students behave with others on equality basis and pay regard to elders. We also expect our students that they should follow all social set up and manners and keep away from bad habits like fighting, abusing, smoking and other bad habits. We allot marks for behaviour and also are strict to remove the student if he proves moral-less in spite of our warnings.

Such quotations and messages which are usually written on the brochures or on the report cards remain confined there while in reality, the goal of education entirely changes into a different form in which schools strive to meet the societal demands. In both ZPHS and NMHS, ‘banking education’ (discussed in chapter 6) is predominant, but with a difference. The difference in the kind of education that a student receives in ZPHS and NMHS can be described as:
'Cramming’ education in NMHS: In NMHS, marks and ranks are deeply internalised in the minds of the children and there is constant grinding of children and regurgitating the information for the exams. They are over-burdened with studies and have very bookish knowledge. Mechanical reading and rote-learning are very predominant in the learning process. From their childhood, students are tuned to study for the competitive exams meant for engineering and medicine. The true potentialities and capabilities of a child are judged through these exams. They are under tremendous pressure from the school and parents for better marks, and thus, the stress and anxiety increases as the child moves towards higher classes. Based on the marks and performance, students are branded as high/low/below average, dullards, brilliant etc. However, intelligence is something which is not static and fixed at birth. It occurs in all social strata and as Mead (1971) rightly points out that “the absence of a nurturing environment stunts and stultifies the mind of a child so that in most cases high natural intelligence is never realised” (1971:75). Children are forced to cram and memorise all the time and do not find time to play or to nurture their creative pursuits.

‘Stress-free’ education in ZPHS: For an outsider, an overall look of government school children may appear tattered, but looking at schools and children from outside gives a very superficial understanding of it. The stress and anxiety under which students of NMHS study was not noticed among the students of ZPHS. Although here too, students dealt with the ritual of exams and marks through rote-learning, they never appeared stressed before exams. In fact, meticulous observation reveals that the students of ZPHS enjoy their childhood with no pressure from any sides whereas children of NMHS are brought up in a strained school atmosphere and with expectations from parents as well as the teachers. However, ZPHS has its own limitations like undedicated and lethargic teachers, high pupil-teacher ratio, government experiments on students, interruptions in academic year, inadequate infrastructure, and the like.
This study attempts to break certain assumptions regarding private schools. Through studying the school culture, it was found that schools like NMHS have evolved to meet the demands of the working class parents and revolve around the ‘instrumental’ order. The thrust is on:

How the schools can teach better, faster and more: how can kids be taught Russian at three, calculus at four, and nuclear physics at five-and neglect to ask a far more important questions: what is happening to our children as human beings? (Wax and Wax, 1971: 16)

However, as discussed earlier, such kind of schools are more like cramming schools and the education given to the students is nowhere near to the quality education. Thus, the notion that all private schools provide quality education which is superior to government schools is fallacious romanticism.